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SIPDIS

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TAGS: [PGOV](#) [KDEM](#) [PNAT](#) [PHUM](#) [PTER](#) [IZ](#)

SUBJECT: SAMARA SUNNI ARABS IN DENIAL ABOUT THEIR IP PROBLEM

Classified By: Political Counselor Robert Ford for reasons 1.4(b) and (d)

1. (C) Summary: During an October 12 meeting in Samarra to discuss security and governance, MOD Senior Advisor General Amer al-Hashimi asked Coalition Force officers to reduce their security controls in the city. LTC Wald of the 42ND ID noted that there had been no change in the demands of the Samarran leaders for many months, and also no cooperation on security matters. The Samarrans were not forthcoming with any deliverables. End Summary.

2. (C) On October 12, General Amer al-Hashimi, Senior Advisor to the Minister of Defense, met in Samarra with city council members, tribal leaders, local imams, and officers from the 42ND ID. The meeting was the result of an invitation from Shaykh Ahmed al-Sammarai, Secretary General of the Sunni Waqf, who recently approached Minister of Defense Dulime offering his assistance and that of Samarra residents to forestall the need for possible MOD military action due to insurgent activity.

3. (C) The city council had promised a list of Samarrans willing to sign up for police duty, and another list of usable intelligence on insurgent activity in the area. They provided neither. Instead, local notables presented a list of demands for Coalition Forces to meet, most of which centered on lessening the Coalition presence in the city.

4. (C) Al-Hashimi urged the Coalition to reopen roads previously closed due to frequent IED attacks, and to remove checkpoints on major roads. He was vague when asked by 42ND ID officers what specific commitments local leaders would make in return, saying merely that "it will be better." 42ND ID, which has tracked a strong correlation between checkpoint management and rate of daily attacks, was skeptical. LTC Wald noted that there has been no change in the demands of the Samarran leaders for many months, and also no cooperation on security matters.

5. (C) Al-Hashimi outlined a plan for the Iraqi Army (IA) 4th Division to take charge of security for the whole city. Coalition Forces would withdraw or reduce their security activities but provide support to the IA. The IA would maintain control only until the Iraqi Police (IP) could resume full responsibility for the city.

6. (C) Al-Hashimi maintained that a similar process had worked in Mahmudiyah, and he believed it would work in Samarra. However, Lt. Colonel Wald said that Samarrans themselves first need to take direct steps to improve security. The first step, he explained, was to create a functional Iraqi Police force. He noted that one day after the last Coalition Force withdrawal from one site in the city, Al Qaeda websites were broadcasting from the exact same location a video of a person targeted by insurgents for assassination walking openly in the streets of Samarra.

8. (C) COMMENT: Reconstruction efforts and Iraqi assumption of local security responsibility in Samarra have been bedeviled by endemic corruption and intimidation, which have trebled project costs, halted construction, frightened IP officers from the streets, frozen local IP recruitment, and dampened the development of accountable local government. The news that the new City Council is taking a technocratic approach is encouraging, and serious efforts should be made to engage and assist them. However, the reluctance of prominent Samarrans to discuss means of lowering the rate of insurgent attacks is discouraging.

10. (C) COMMENT CONTINUED While al-Hashimi's commitment to assist Samarra is commendable, it is not clear how his intent to introduce an Iraqi Army battalion into Samarra correlates with national-level MOD planning. Moreover, his eagerness to please local sheikhs and clerics by advocating the dismantling of the current Coalition security apparatus is troubling. End Comment.  
Khalilzad